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ABSTRACT

Standard histories of public relations privilege the field's association with business enterprise, and traditionally place the origins of the field in the press agentry of the 19th century and in the rise of corporate concern with public opinion in the first decade of the 20th century. However, the roots of public relations reach both farther and deeper into western history and cultural ethos than present histories reveal. Public relations history can only be accurately constructed by examining the ways that many diverse groups contributed through their use of informational (propaganda) campaigns to shape public opinion and manage human behavior through the centuries. These groups have been large and small, and they have represented both established authority and oppositional social movements. Brief case studies of the Catholic Church's propaganda campaigns during the holy crusades between the 11th and 13th centuries and the women's suffrage campaign during the 19th and early 20th centuries serve as examples to illustrate this new, more comprehensive approach to the development of public relations history. (Contains 33 references.) (Author/NH)

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Toward a Comprehensive History of Public Relations

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Abstract:

Toward a Comprehensive History of Public Relations

Standard histories of public relations privilege the field's association with business enterprise, beginning in the late nineteenth century, when public relations became professionalized into routine practices, and the educational and ethical aspects of the field came into clearer focus. The present article advances the argument that public relations history is more than this. Public relations can only be accurately constructed, in fact, by examining the ways that many diverse groups contributed through their use of informational (propaganda) campaigns to shape public opinion and manage human behavior through the centuries. These groups have been large and small, and they have represented both established authority, as well as oppositional social movements seeking greater access or reform. Brief case studies of the Catholic church's propaganda campaign during the holy crusades between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, and the women's suffrage campaign during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries serve as examples to illustrate this new, more comprehensive approach to the development of public relations history.

Toward a Comprehensive History of Public Relations

by Carolyn M. Byerly

[Presented to Public Relations Division, AEJMC, August 1993]

Introduction

Standard texts on public relations traditionally place the origins of the field in press agentry of the nineteenth century and in the rise of corporate concern with public opinion in the first decades of the twentieth century. Circus entrepreneur P.T. Barnum is the figure most commonly associated with shaping the attention-getting tactics of the first, and Ivy Ledbetter Lee, who convinced the likes of J.D. Rockefeller to upgrade his image by behaving more kindly toward public complaints about business practices, the second.

This article advances the argument that the roots of public relations reach both farther and deeper into our western history and cultural ethos than present journalism and public relations histories reveal, and that many more actors were involved than are generally credited. We seek to show that a history of the modern field of public relations should more accurately reflect the complex events that have shaped its development. While the modern profession is inextricably linked to twentieth century corporate and business practices, as well as to government, we believe that the field can only really be understood in terms of a longer chain of events.

A new approach necessarily requires a cross-disciplinary examination of the ways that information campaigns helped to formulate what we have come to know as public relations practices. We have to begin by looking backward in time many centuries to locate a significant beginning point for understanding the ways that information campaigns came to be used for social control of large populations as well as, conversely, used by oppositional groups to change those social practices.

This wider view of the field's development is not without precedent. Other communications scholars, such as Newsom, Scott and Turk (1989), assert that "Saying PR grew out of press agentry is like saying jazz grew out of ragtime: partly true, but not the whole truth" (p. 31). In identifying the central element of public relations -- persuasion -- the authors recognize the ways that the Caesars of the Roman Empire and, later, the Catholic Church, laid the foundations for our modern field by finding ways to communicate, persuade, and control their constituencies (Newsom et al, 1989, p. 33). Citing Shramm (1988) and others, Kovarik (1993) shows that tracing the roots of persuasion necessarily brings us to an examination of mass communications media, as far back as the first century B.C. and the Roman senate's newspaper *Acta Diurna*, which reported the senate's activities and, a few centuries later, the palace report *Ti Pao*, in present-day Beijing, which served a similar purpose (Kovarik 1993). The innovation of the printing press in Europe (and later the American colonies) would make it possible, even irresistible, for popular groups, religious organizations, and governments all to disseminate pamphlets and other publications aimed at informing and shaping public opinion. Kielbowicz and Scherer (1986) show that for more than a century, the press has been a crucial component in both mobilizing and sustaining social movements. Thus, analyzing the public relations components of social movements necessarily requires examining the ways in which movement participants have managed informational campaigns in print and (more recently) the broadcast media.

As the field of public relations today expands both theoretically and practically, the omissions from standard histories of public relations become more visible and they suggest the need for further inquiry into and debate about the meaning and development of the field. The present discussion is not meant to be exhaustive in this regard; the definitive rewriting of public relations history will be a bigger project involving the work of many. This discussion is intended rather to contribute

toward this beginning by outlining some of the missing elements, and then providing brief case studies to suggest where further attention might be concentrated. Let the discussion, then, become an invitation to those in many fields to consider how public relations may have played a role in shaping the events and issues that concern them.

Definitional issues

Textbooks today generally agree that certain characteristics define the practice of public relations. They agree, for instance, that PR practices tend to be goal-orientated. That PR involves the implementation of intentional, strategic processes. And that PR is generally carried out by organizations seeking to establish mutually beneficial relationships between themselves and their publics within a complex environment (Baskin & Aronoff,1992; Wicox et al, 1989; Cutlip et al, 1985; Grunig and Hunt, 1984).

This last point, the notion that a symmetrical relationship between organizations and the publics they serve provides a stronger ethical foundation for PR than symmetrical models (which favor primarily the goals of the organization), is relatively recent, dating to the World Assembly of Public Relations' meeting in Mexico City in 1978. At that event, the group adopted a definition of public relations that recognizes the field's dual obligations to serve both an organization's and the public's interest (Wilcox et al, 1989). This position has been more recently examined by academics like J. Grunig (See Grunig and Hunt, 1984) and L. Grunig (1992), who stress that symmetrical PR models are more likely to consider and respond to the concerns of both organization and public(s) than are asymmetrical models, which favor the interests of the organization over outside publics.

In their earliest manifestations, public relations practices were not always coherently defined, nor were those who employed them concerned with symmetrical communication or mutually beneficially outcomes.

Neither has leadership in the field been the work of only a few. There has been a wide range of public relations actors -- men and women who have assumed the role of power brokers among groups of one kind or another in society. These have not been limited to the "great men" of private enterprise like Barnum, Lee, or Bernays, but have included many lesser known, even anonymous actors whose contributions to the present field that we call "public relations" are less acclaimed.

Their organizations have been both small and large, both loosely organized and firmly structured, and have been concerned with *maintaining and strengthening* status quo institutional values and practices, as well as with *reforming or radically altering* those practices. In other words, public relations practices have provided ready mechanisms for anyone to use, regardless of their particular goals, ethics, organizational structure, constituency or resources.

This offers a longer, more inclusive view of public relations history, a view that suggests the need for an operational definition that recognizes both *asymmetrical* and *symmetrical* approaches to the practice of PR and the contributions of many actors with divergent goals. Though future refinements will surely be needed, the following reformulated definition of public relations lends itself to the development of a more inclusive history:

> Any intentional, managed campaign intended to negotiate the power relations between (or among) groups in society, or within the membership of a given organization, for the purpose of either (1) maintaining or strengthening status quo institutional practices, or of (2) reforming or radically altering those practices.

The concept central to this definition is the *public relations campaign*, a systematic informational (propaganda) program with specific political, social, or economic goals. Even the earliest public relations campaigns typically had one or more target audiences, made certain explicit promises to those audiences, were

conveyed through both interpersonal and mediated communication, had an *intentional,* comprehensive strategy with short- and long-term measurable outcomes. Moreover, the early campaigns were *managed,* either through a centralized administration or a network of administrators. Early PR campaigns were also complex organized efforts aimed at persuading and controlling. They utilized rhetoric, symbols, and slogans, and they produced measurable historical outcomes. These historical public relations campaigns have been deeply connected to the social events of their day, both in terms of their origins and results.

Both the reformulated definition of PR and the methods we are suggesting for rewriting public relations history place PR practices at the very heart of human social relations and the power struggles among specific groups at any given point in time.

The role of a critical theoretical framework

Social historians, and cultural studies and feminist scholars, have laid the essential theoretical groundwork necessary for writing a new history of public relations. By the early 1970s, New Left historians in Britain and the U.S. called into question what had previously passed as official histories in many fields of study. Their primary concerns were with who and what was left out in terms of actors and meaningful events. William Appleton Williams, Natalie Zemon Davis, Sheila Rothbotham, Linda Gordon, Howard Zinn, Robert Darnton and others have pointed out that the contributions and lives of ordinary working people, as well as women and ethnic minorities, were most specifically overlooked in official histories; because of these omissions, history represented the views and experiences of social elites and told a partial and inaccurate story, they said.

Lerner (1982) has noted that women, in particular, have been left out of standard histories of all kinds and thereby "denied a useable past." McBride (1989) adds that the "recognition of reformers as role models may be especially useful for

women practitioners who lack a useable past more than any in the profession [of public relations]." Harding (1981) and other ethnic minority historians similarly seek to expand our concept of U.S. history by considering ethnicity in historical processes and the contributions of specific ethnic individuals and groups to the formation of historical events.

Standard (i.e., "official") histories of public relations cannot escape close scrutiny. Pearson's (1992) insightful work in the field encourages us to examine perspectives of PR historians as well as the philosophical frameworks of analysis they use. There is "no single, privileged interpretation of public relations' past," Pearson says, and he acknowledges that the discourse now emerging around PR history makes that history "contested ground" (p. 113).

In fact, standard PR histories have, until recently, been so concerned with keeping their interpretation of the most significant public relations developments in the domain of private enterprise that they have even relegated powerful, legitimate organizations unconnected to corporations to the periphery of the field. Religious organizations are an interesting case in point. Historically the overseer of belief systems and the social practices that flowed from them, the church merits significantly more consideration for the ways it has managed to persuade and control masses of people through the ages through propaganda campaigns than public relations historians have given it. Using Armstrong's work (1991) as a point of departure, we will show how the careful historian is only able to understand the development of western economic and political systems by studying the early church's mastery at using informational campaigns to generate and sustain the medieval crusades. We will also show how other groups contributed to a richly more complex development of the PR field than standard histories reveal.

There is abundant critical (including feminist) theoretical work from which to draw in writing a more coherent history of public relations. In addition to Pearson

(1992), there is related work by Robins et all (1987), for instance, who stress the importance of viewing propaganda as "an integral feature of democratic societies" (p. 7). Robins and co-authors say:

> The very complexity of the developed nation-state appears to be such that a 'free market' of ideas and debate must be superseded by the (scientific) management and orchestration of public opinion. (Robins et al, 1987:7)

Robins and his co-authors' insistence that information and its communication are inherently implicated in the relations of power among groups in society provides an important theoretical starting point for our own discussion. This approach coincides with the work of other critical scholars who examine communications processes within a matrix of social, political and economic events.

Writing an acccurate, weil-developed history of public relations necessarily requires us to reconsider the ways in which messages and images have been socially controlled historically in order to manage public opinion and behavior. Similarly, it requires us to consider the fact that both those in positions of legitimate authority and those who have sought to gain access to it have used public relations strategies, tools, and evaluations measures to effect their goals. The following very different two examples are meant to illustrate how this has occurred.

Church and suffrage campaigns as examples

The first example involves the adoption of rudimentary public relations tactics by the Catholic church during the Middle Ages to re-establish its hold over land and wealth and its control over the population. The church's use of propaganda and other elements of public relations is given short shrift in standard histories of public relations. Popular college texts, like those by Seitel (1992), Wilcox et al (1989), and Grunig and Hunt (1984), routinely mention the church's role in establishing its

Congretario de propanda fide to propagate the faith in 1622, but they otherwise fail to explore the extensive efforts by the church to organize and sustain its missionary campaigns into the Americas, or, centuries earlier, its effective long-term strategy for mobilizing and maintaining the holy crusades in the lands we now call the Middle East. Newsom et al (1989) makes some progress in this regard, with its longer (350-word) discussion of early church contributions to modern public relations fields. But even this falls short of the potential to firmly locate the church's early propaganda campaigns in public relations' development.

There would be no lack of texts for such a study. Church records would yield much information from the writings of popes, other clerics and lay observors through the centuries about the ways that church leaders created and carried out plans to impose and maintain its authority over vast numbers of people for extended periods of time. Authoritative histories of the times and even popular accounts would provide useful detail about the signs and symbols of campaign language, the network of church leaders who carried out the campaigns, and the methods by which leaders gauged their audiences' responses.

Van Leuven (1989) suggests that the scholarly examination of public relations campaigns can employ social learning models designed to learn the relationship between "careful synchronization of media publicity and interpersonal support programs" (p. 196). Careful historians can, retrospectively, theorize about the impact of systematic propaganda campaigns on target populations using available historical records.

Darnton (1984) suggests that historical research should begin where a thing is most opaque, by carefully examining a word or an event in terms of the historical context in which it occurs. This approach relies on the interpretive sciences and requires laborious dedication (Darnton 1984:5-6). To illustrate how interpretive method might be applied in the construction of a new public relations history, we

look to the case of the medieval holy crusades. One obvious opacity, and thus a starting point, is found in the matter of motivation among the crusaders: How were Pope Urban II and his successors able to successfully mobilize and maintain a commitment from millions of Europeans to travel and fight in distant battles that had little practical daily value for their communities or families?

We know that the first crusades, which began in the late eleventh century, and eventually took an estimated 8 to 10 million lives, represent a significant historical moment: They mark the point at which the European church departed from a predominantly non-violent orientation to one focused on armed aggression against the Muslims in the Holy Lands of today's Middle East. How was Pope Urban II able to devise a strategy to accomplish this, a strategy that could be adapted and carried on by succeeding popes?

The historical explanations for the crusades are admittedly complex, but the genius of Urban II in his ability to appropriate these for the church's advantage offers much in the way of material for public relations historians. Armstrong's recent work *Holy War: The Crusades and Their Impact on Today's World* (1991) reports that Europe had experienced prolonged hardship and social disorganization brought on by two centuries (800-1000 a.d.) of invasion, economic encirclement of the Holy Roman Empire by non-Christian groups (the pagan Normans in the north, the Muslim Saracens in the southeast), famine, bubonic plague, in-fighting among aristocratic classes, and the failure of peace movements. These events helped to whip up an "apocalyptic ferver" among Europeans by the eleventh century, she says, a fervor directed and given purpose around the year 1000 with the revival of an old myth: Before the end of the world, an emperor from the West would be crowned in Jerusalem to fight the Antichrist there (Armstrong, 1991, p. 61).

By 1033, swarms of Europeans began to advance toward Jerusalem in search of the Antichrist, which they hoped to abolish to gain God's favor. This popular

movement to re-establish unity, prosperity and peace was complemented by other factors. For instance, the church had acquired a great deal of political influence during the Holy Roman Empire, and its clergy had risen to "princely power" (Ranke, 1966, p. 20). But the disintegration of the empire, together with the clergy's general loss of favor and power among their parishioners began to lose the church popular support among its followers, according to Walker (1983). Walker and Armstrong both observe that crusaders were a bloody lot who came to thrive on destruction of those in their path through rape, torture, mutilation, and the taking of land and goods.

Pope Urban II saw opportunity in the primitive self-determinism of those who had begun to march off to war under their own random, self-serving ventures. His famous speech of 1095, which launched the First (official) Crusade, seems to have galvanized the popular (unofficial) movements by giving them legitimacy, directing them at specific enemies (the Saracens in the area of Jerusalem, the Muslims in Sicily and Spain, etc.) on behalf of the church, and establishing a justification for active aggression. Those who participated, his speech promised, would be be placed above restrictions of law, would be forgiven their sins, and would have eternal bliss in heaven, without time in purgatory (Walker 1983, p. 192). Thus, a loosly organized popular movement was appropriated by the Catholic church and then organized into a strategic plan aimed at reasserting its power and wealth. Church leaders, led by the pope, ultimately implemented the plan by means of an extensive network of church officials already well-entrenched around Europe. Familiar symbols of cross and God, and tenets associated with sin, forgiveness, and afterlife as commensurate rewards, were all invoked to coalese the long-term campaign. Maintaining loyalty and motivation to fight was an essential task on the part of the church, particularly in the case of those Europeans who were born and/or remained

to live in the Holy Lands and began to evince a decided interest in getting along with their Muslim opponents (Armstrong 1991:240-1).

Armstrong believes that keeping motivation alive to carry on the crusades was essential to the Catholic Church by the end of the twelfth century, when "the practice of the holy war was now central to the developing Western mentality," i.e., the motivatation to expand European lands, trade and influence. This mentality, Armstrong says, also underlies the West's present-day bellicose relations with Muslim people (Armstrong, 1991:272).

The second example considers public relations in quite another way -- the use of public relations practices in oppositional social movements. Just as religious history has escaped serious critical examination by public relations historians, so has the employment of public relations practices in this regard. Even standard PR texts that pay fleeting attention to the role of social movements in the development of the field minimize or trivialize the possibility of their substantial meaningful contribution to PR's evolution. For example, Wilcox et al (1989) uses the term "causes," when referring to the antislavery, antivivisectionism, women's rights, and prohibition movements of the last century (pp. 40) and their modern counterparts (p. 448). Even texts that lean toward a more comprehensive history of the field give short shrift to the substantial contributions of social reform campaigns. Newsom et al (1989), for instance, give only about 150 words to the "agitators of many persuasions," such as those in the antislavory and women's suffrage movements (p. 37) before skipping ahead to the role of business in defining the field today.

Public relations strategies, in fact, have provided a basic framework for the advancement of political agendas of the abolitionist movement (late 1700s to mid 1860s), women's suffrage movement (1840s to 1921), and their more recent sequels, the civil rights and feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s. The environmental movements of the both the 1920s and 1970s could also be added to

this list, as could others. The ways in which public relations strategies drive modern-day social movements have only recently become the focus of PR researchers like J. Grunig (1989), L. Grunig (1986, 1987), Kielbowicz and Scherer (1986), Murphy & Dee (1992), McBride (1989), Kovarik (1993) and a few others. And they merit more serious scrutiny for their contributions to the PR field's development.

While a full discussion of all these movements lies beyond the scope of the present discussion, a brief look at one of them -- the women's suffrage movement -- will serve to illustrate how public relations may be studied in terms of its role in oppositional campaigns.

The late nineteenth century women's suffrage movement in the U.S. grew out of the abolitionist movement to end slavery. Feminist historian Eleanor Flexner (1975) says that as abolitionists, women first won the right to speak in public; from this they developed a philosophy of their place in society and of their basic rights (p. 41). For a long time, the two movements nurtured each other, with the early feminists even publishing their polemical pieces in abolitionist presses when mainstream newspapers refused them space. There was nothing accidental about the women's suffrage movement, or its parent women's rights movement, from the very beginning. Both are usually dated to the Women's Rights Convention of Seneca Falls in 1948, but they were really the culmination of intellectual and political organizing work of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, William Lloyd Garrison and others in the U.S. for more than a decade before (Catt and Shuler, 1969:19).

The push for women's rights was the product of women's mounting discontent with the many barriers to social participation that they had long experienced -- lack of access to education and occupations, rights to own property, lack of suffrage, *de facto* prohibitions to speak publicly or hold office in organizations in which they

worked ardently, etc. The eighteenth century European Enlightment had witnessed the emergence of challenges to female subjugation, the best known intellectual treatises coming from England's Mary Wollenstonecraft and John Stuart Mill. Such ideas did not leap across the ocean and incite unsuspecting communities in America; in fact, even America's founding fathers and other early leaders were products of the Enlightenment and its values for equality, independence, and the potential for each person's fulfillment. The currency of these ideas had defined and then inspired both revolution and reform in the overthrow of an old regime (France's), and the independence of another (the American colonies that would become the U.S.).

The formulation and dissemination of ideas about women's rights (including suffrage) through loosely-organized propaganda campaigns were central to women securing the vote and other rights they sought in mid-nineteenth century America. Like other social reform movements with a specific goal, the women's suffrage "movement" was first and finally a network of separate activities strung out across the new U.S. nation. That network was united by a common goal, an informational campaign aimed at mobilizing and maintaining its own membership as well as shaping general public opinion, and annual meetings between 1848 and 1861 and again after 1865 where leaders defined and refined movement strategies (Kielbowicz 1986; Steiner 1983; Griffith 1984). The National Women's Suffrage Association (NWSA) was the primary organization that coalesced the most radical leaders and activities from state to state. The most visible NWSA leaders included Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and Susan B. Anthony who were relentless in their goals to gain women the vote and specific other legislation, including the right to own property. The political strategy for securing suffrage was primarily national, while a state-by-state approached was used for securing legislation for other rights.

From the beginning, the suffrage movement and its parent women's rights movement employed both interpersonal and mediated communications. The first consisted of holding organizing meetings among potential followers in communities along the East Coast, midwest and even in the western states; giving speeches at movement and other events; and annual women's rights conventions beginning in 1948. Griffith (1984) indicates that many of these events sought mainstream newspaper coverage, but that when leaders saw news articles trivializing and making fun of their work, they sought alternative channels. It was not until 1860 that Susan B. Anthony said she began to see "serious news" of the women's rights campaign (Catt and Schuler, 1970). Movement media -- newspapers and journals like *Lily, Una* and *Revolution* -- were therefore essential to the survival and eventual success of the movement. Steiner (1983) has shown that the network of feminist presses formed by these and other publications like them provided a key internal public relations tool within the women's rights movement by creating a forum for ideas to be presented and debated, and for feelings of community to be fostered among movement members who were often separated by great distances.

McBride (1989) has pointed out that in Wisconsin the support for a constitutional amendment giving women the right to vote began with a few interested individuals and was carried out through carefully managed informational campaigns that included "publicity, press agentry, publicity, publications, petition drives, advertising, merchandising, lobbying, membership recruitment and training, special events, fundraising . . and issues management, or 'crisis PR'." (p. 404)

The suffrage movement's own literature offers abundant evidence of the movement's specific and multiple uses of pseudo-events and other standard, familiar public relations techniques. For instance, in *Woman Suffrage and Politics:*

The Inner Story of the Suffrage Movement (1969 [originally 1923]), suffragist leaders Carrie Chapman Catt and Nettie Rogers Shuler report that the movement achieved its ends as a result of:

> the great suffrage parades -- armies of women with banners. orange and black, yellow and blue and purple and green and gold, -- went marching through the streets of cities and towns of America; when "suffrage canvassers," knocking on the doors of America, were a daily sight; when the suffragist on the soap box was heard on every street corner; when huge suffrage mass meetings were packing auditoriums from end to end of the country; when lively "suffrage stunts" were rousing and stirring the country; when suffrage was in everybody's mouth and on the front page of every newspaper. . . (p. 3)

The suffrage movement also allied itself with other other reform movements as a way of shaping public opinion. Already mentioned was the important relationship between abolitionist and feminist movements, which prompted key figures like abolitionist leader William Lloyd Garrison, an early advocate of women's rights, to speak publicly and to use his newspaper the*Liberator* as a forum for women's movement ideas. Women's rights leaders like Susan B. Anthony and the Grimke sisters had also been active in the temperance movement (a primarily women-led movement) and saw the utility and wisdom of using temperance journals and events as forums for their new feminist agenda (Griffith 1984:76-77).

The suffrage movement organized and managed its public relations campaign over a period of seven decades in a much different way than the Catholic church managed its holy crusades campaign. The suffrage movement employed a loosely-organized, highly decenralized PR effort, with leaders who were united only through their voluntary commitments. Yet, the suffrage project fits our working definition of a public relations campaign and it serves as a model for studying how other

"marginalized" groups employed PR strategies and tools to negotiate social power in U.S. society in years since.

The suffragists had a specific goal (national suffrage for women), a promise for those who joined the movement (fuller participation in society by), and measurable outcomes (passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1921, and a new era of social relations between the sexes). There was also a coherent strategy to shape public opinion about women's inherent human value and their rights to enjoy the same privileges as their male counterparts. The suffrage campaign was carried out through an intentionally enacted system of interpersonal and mediated communication, and it succeeded, finally. Just a year before the Nineteenth Amendment was passed, giving women the vote, the suffrage movement had established its own public relations agency in Washington D.C. -- the first to be owned and operated by women (Beasley, 1988).

Discussion

Before the profession of public relations, there was the practice. In order to understand the modern profession and to adequately theorize it, public relations practices must be more accurately historicized and described. This necessarily requires the new public relations historian to move backward in time from the late nineteenth/early twentieth century period, to which the beginning of public relations is usually traced, and examine much earlier periods in western history. In so doing, the new PR historian must look for a more inclusive cast of PR actors and consider the ways in which rudimentary public relations rhetoric, symbols, strategies, and campaign management fit the varied goals of groups that used them.

Moving toward a more comprehensive history of public relations also means reviewing what we mean by "public relations." The foregoing discussion provides a reformulated definition that moves beyond the standard functionalist definition, concerned with the discrete practices of a profession, and adopts a new role for

public relations, that of agency in social process. This broader, more flexible definition provides a closer fit with the diverse ways that both legitimate, well-entrenched organizations like the Catholic church and emerging oppositional political movements, like the women's suffrage movement, entered into the historical events at given periods in time to effect their desired goals. This is not meant to exclude the important contributions made by private enterprise to the field's development by small-scale hucksters like P.T. Barnum (with his notorious press-agentry) and more urbane corporate figures like Ivy Ledbetter Lee. Nor does it mean to disregard the importance of the field's consolidation through college preparation courses first designed by Edward Bernays after World War I, or the significant ways that his propaganda campaigns for both federal government and business helped to mold the field into a more discrete set of professional practices.

However, it goes without saying that the preceding discussion has meant to argue against the dominant assumption that public relations has been defined *primarily* by business. We believe this view misrepresents the true nature of the field today, the roots from which it grew, and the many women and men who contributed to the field's development. Tracing the field's development through specific propaganda campaigns allows us to foreground religious activities of the early church, like the medieval holy crusades (which used public relations to reassert control over land, wealth and people) as well as more recent campaigns for social reform (which have sought to radically alter social policy with regard to gender, race, the environment, and so forth).

With sufficient work, public relations historians, we believe, will be able to develop a more comphrensive history of the field that will democratize the way the field is taught and practiced.

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